

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-11, and 13-45 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 6-11, 13-15, 18-20, 23-25, 29-37, 40-42, 44, and 45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by JP 2000-86064 to Ishiguro et al. (herein "Ishiguro"). Claims 3 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ishiguro in view of JP 62-8965 to Hoshi et al. (herein "Hoshi"). Claims 4, 5, 16, 17, 21, 22, 27, 28, 38, 39, and 43 were objected to as dependent upon rejected base claims, but were noted as allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of the allowable subject matter.

Addressing now each of the rejections based on the cited art to Ishiguro and Ishiguro in view of Hoshi, those rejections are traversed by the present response.

Each of the claims is amended by the present response to clarify features recited therein, and to particularly no longer recite a "piling means" or "piling device", but to now instead recite a "discharge tray". According to each of the independent claims a sheet-shaped medium processing apparatus has a structure in which "concave sections are formed at an upper surface of said discharge tray so that part of said one pair of arranging members may be placed below the upper surface of said discharge tray". Such subject matter is shown in Figure 2(a) in the present specification as a non-limiting example. As shown in Figure 2(a) a discharge tray 12 includes a concave section 80a formed opposite the arranging member 102a and another concave section 80b formed opposed to the another arranging member 102b. In such a structure a depression below an upper surface of the discharge tray 12 is partially formed (see also the specification at page 25, lines 17-20).

With such a structure in the claimed invention, when paper is not piled on the concave sections 80a and 80b, the arranging members 102a and 102b located in an acceptance

position have parts in the concave sections 80a and 80b, overlapping with the discharge tray 12. Therefore, it becomes possible to strike the arranging members 102a and 102b against the end faces of the paper S in an arranging operation with high precision (see also the present specification at page 25, lines 20-25).

Applicants respectfully submit that such features clearly distinguish over the teachings in Ishiguro. More particularly, Ishiguro merely shows arranging portions 211 and 31 that slide along a track in a processing tray 11. The processing tray 11 in Ishiguro, however, is not a “discharge tray” as recited in the claims. That is evident from the fact that Ishiguro discloses an accumulation tray 12, i.e. a discharge tray, which is separate from the processing tray 11.

In maintaining the outstanding rejection the outstanding Office Action notes that the claims did not recite any feature that would distinguish element 11 in Ishiguro from the previously claimed “piling means”. In response to that position applicants again note that the claims now more clearly recite a “discharge tray”, and applicants respectfully submit that the processing tray 11 in Ishiguro is not a discharge tray as Ishiguro discloses a separate element 12 as a discharge tray.

In such ways, applicants respectfully submit that the claims as currently written distinguish over the teachings in Ishiguro.

Moreover, no teachings in Hoshi can overcome the above-noted deficiencies in Ishiguro.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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